

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 05358 191128Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3099
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5358

EXDIS

NOFORN

BRUSSELS FOR USNMR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: IR, PK, IN, AF
SUBJ: AUDIENCE WITH SHAH

REF: TEHRAN 5346

1. IN DISCUSSING HIS "EASTERN PROBLEM" DURING MY JUNE 18 AUDIENCE, THE SHAH EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PAKISTAN, INDIA, AND AFGHANISTAN. HIS MOST IMMEDIATE WORRY IS PAKISTAN AND HE EXPECTS TO DISCUSS HIS CONCERNS WITH BHUTTO WHEN LATTER VISITS TEHRAN JUNE 21. BUT, IN GENERAL, HE ADDS UP ALL THIS REGION TO A GROWING CAUSE OF TROUBLE FOR IRAN AND, OF COURSE, HE PARLAYS THIS FUTURE TROUBLE INTO THE NEED FOR FURTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO PROTECT HIS EASTERN REGIONS.
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2. HE WAS HARSH IN HIS CONDEMNATION OF BHUTTO. HE SAID THE TINKERING WITH THE ELECTION BY "HIS PEOPLE" WAS NEEDLESS. HE WOULD HAVE WON 70 PER CENT IN AN HONEST ELECTION. HIS INVECTIVE AGAINST THE US WAS RIDICULOUS AND DAMAGING TO THE REGION. HIS DESIRE FOR A REPROCESSING PLANT WAS STUPID;
"WHAT WOULD HE DO WITH TWO OR THREE SILLY BOMBS?"

3. AND YET, HE FELT BHUTTO WAS FAR BETTER THAN THE ALTER-NATIVES. IF THE OPPOSITION WINS THE NEXT ELECTION, IT WILL SOON SPLIT UP BETWEEN THOSE WHO WISH TO CARRY PAKISTAN BACK THREE CENTURIES AND THOSE WHO WANT SOCIALISM. THE PROSPECT IS FRAGMENTATION. EVEN IF BHUTTO SHOULD WIN THE NEXT ELECTION, THE RESULTS MAY BE THE SAME BECAUSE FEELINGS ARE SO INFLAMED. HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT BHUTTO WANTS IN HIS COMING VISIT. (HIS CHILDREN TRANSITED TEHRAN JUNE 17 HEADING WEST.) HE WILL LET ME KNOW IF THE INTERVIEW PRODUCES ANYTHING.

4. AS FOR INDIA, HE BELIEVES THE CONGRESS PARTY IS DEAD AND THAT MAY BE THE END OF CENTRAL AUTHORITY ("HOW CAN YOU GOVERN A NATION WITH 168 RELIGIONS?"). DESAI IS SOUND AND CONCILIATORY. HE IS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE SHAH'S PROJECT FOR AN INDIAN OCEAN COMMON MARKET (I HAD NEVER HEARD OF THIS ONE BEFORE). HE IS NOT SENILE, BUT HE IS WEAK. HIS JANATA PARTY IS A MISH-MASH. BENGAL VOTED COMMUNIST. KERALA HAS ALREADY GONE. THE PROSPECTS FOR INDIA ARE ALSO FRAGMENTATION.

5. AS FOR AFGHANISTAN, HE IS ANNOYED. HE HAS BEEN OVERLY GENEROUS WITH KABUL. HE HAS GIVEN THEM ALL THEY WANT. BUT THEY RESPOND BY AGITATING THE BALUCHISTAN QUESTION. THIS IS MISCHIEVOUS AND CAN ONLY REFLECT SOVIET INSPIRATION. THE SOVIET HOLD ON KABUL IS INSIDIOUS. DAOUD MAY BE A WILY OLD FOX WHO CAN DEAL WITH MOSCOW BUT HIS SUCCESSORS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ARMY, HAVE ALL BEEN TRAINED IN RUSSIA. THEY WILL BE WILLING DUPES FOR THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL DRIVE TO THE SEA OF OMAN.

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6. HE MUST MAKE US GRASP THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM ON IRAN'S EASTERN FRONTIER. THE STRANGULATION OF ALL OIL TO EUROPE AND JAPAN IS POTENTIALLY IN RUSSIA'S REACH. HOW COULD THE US COPE WITH SUCH A THRUST? WE COULD NOT THINK OF SENDING US FORCES TO STOP A DRIVE THROUGH BALUCHISTAN. IRAN MUST HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO PARADROP ONE DIVISION (SIC) INTO THAT AREA AND SUPPORT IT. THIS IS WHY HE NEEDS THE AMST AIRCRAFT TO REPLACE THE C-130. THIS IS WHY HE NEEDS THE NAVAL FORCES HE IS ACQUIRING AND THE AWACS TO CONTROL SUCH OPERATIONS IN THE WILDEST PART OF HIS COUNTRY.

7. I TOLD THE SHAH THAT I WAS FRANKLY IGNORANT ABOUT THIS WHOLE ARRAY OF PROBLEMS AND THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO EDUCATE ME BEFORE I COULD REACT INTELLIGENTLY TO HIS RECITAL. HE UNDERTOOK GLADLY TO DO SO.

8. COMMENT: ANY GUIDANCE ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE WELCOME.

SULLIVAN

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